

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: May 20, 2004

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265/SA-143)

TO: Ron Morinaka (KEWU – 4)
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager, COTR

Proposed Action: Therriault Creek Meadow Restoration Project

Project No: 199500400

Watershed Management Program (See App. A : Available Management Techniques): 1.6 Install Large Woody Debris Structures; 1.7 Install Other Habitat Complexity Structures; 1.9 Structural Bank Protection using Bioengineering Methods; 1.16 Spawning Habitat Enhancements; 1.17 Rearing Habitat Enhancements; 2.1 Maintain Healthy Riparian Plant Communities.

Location: On Therriault Creek, about 16 miles southeast of the Eureka, Montana in Lincoln County, within T.36N, R.26W., Sec. 3 and T.35N., R.26W., Sec. 34,

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), in cooperation with the Kootenai River Network

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to fund FWP to reconstruct and stabilize about 9,100 feet of stream channel to a properly functioning stream, improve fish habitat for native salmonids, and improve stream flow in Therriault Creek. These goals would be accomplished by:

- Constructing an entirely new channel to restore proper dimension, pattern, and profile
- Installing root wads and tree revetment on meandering bends; and
- Restoring the riparian community with shrub plantings and sod placement. Installation of cross vanes, consisting of rocks and trees, and cobble patch structures will control the grade throughout the project.

The project will double the stream length in the project area, and create about 55 acres of converted wetland. The creek is a focus for restoration efforts and is a significant source of sediment, based on identification by the Montana FWP. The project reach has also been classified as habitat impaired on the Montana Water Quality Limited Segment List due to channel instabilities and in-stream barriers to fish migration. Therriault Creek has been extensively modified through land cover disturbances, riparian vegetation clearing, improper livestock grazing practices, and physical stream straightening which has caused bank erosion, channel degradation, introduction of exotic plants, local extirpation of beavers, and reduced quality and quantity of fish spawning and rearing habitat.

Currently the stream channel is cut 6 to 8 feet that has altered the base ground water level. In addition, the biological productivity in Therriault Creek is substantially lower than its potential.

Construction of the project will follow the Therriault Creek Meadow Stream and Wetland restoration Project Final Design Report which includes proposed stabilization structures, the construction sequencing

strategy, a site restoration plan, a revegetation and wetland restoration plan, and other project-related details.

Analysis: The NEPA compliance checklist for this project was completed by Mr. Jim Dunnigan of the Montana FWP and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD). The qualifying sections of that EIS are listed above.

Anticipated short-term impacts of the project largely relate to ground disturbing activities during the construction phase, but are expected to be mitigated by the expected long-term benefits of the project. On the long-term, the project will likely improve habitat for spawning and rearing of fish habitat, soils should stabilize as a result of applied techniques, bank erosion will be reduced, channel stability should improve, revegetation should improve the riparian community, fish migration corridors should improve in value and uses, stream water temperatures should reduce from the current baseline, the abundance and complexity of instream cover should increase, and aquatic life in general should prosper better in the affected reach of Theriault Creek.

The proposed project is within the geographic range of the following species listed under the Endangered Species Act: Kootenai River white sturgeon, bull trout, gray wolf, grizzly bear, bald eagle, Canada lynx, water howelia, and Spalding's campion. Based on a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service intraservice agreement (NEPA Compliance Checklist (CX No 1.4B3, 516 DM 6 Appendix 1), the FWS has deemed that there are no adverse effects on any listed species or species proposed to be listed on the ESA list (pers. comm. w/ Rox Rogers, Partners for Wildlife - FWS, Kalispell, MT on May 19, 2004). The checklist further identifies that no adverse effects are also expected on critical habitat for these species, as well. Accordingly, no further ESA documentation is required.

Under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Wildlife program, archaeologist Brant Loflin conducted a cultural resource inventory on May 8, 2003, and the results showed that no cultural resources were located on the area of potential effect. In his letter to the Montana State Historic Preservation Office dated July 30, 2003, Mr. Loflin's recommendation was to proceed without further review. The Montana SHPO concurred with the findings as per their August 28, 2003 stamp on Mr. Loflin's letter. This was conformed by a telephone conversation with Damon Murdo (Montana SHPO) on May 18, 2004.

The FWP prepared a draft EA and circulated the document for public comment from May 28 through June 27, 2003. Notices were advertised in local newspapers and notifications were mailed to local conservation groups, timber companies, businesses, and natural resource agencies. The document was also made available at local libraries, Montana FWP headquarters' office, and on the Montana FWP Internet website. Three commenters provided a written response to the draft EA.

The project will be constructed on private property, owned by Rick Vredenburg. Agreement between the FWS, FWP, and the landowner is being made toward reaching the project goals. The FWS Partners Program has been a close cooperator in the development and support of this project. This includes future land use. Other parties who have been consulted and/or who have provided technical assistance in the design of the project include: the Kootenai River Network, Water Consultants, Inc., Resgen Wildland Hydrology, Inc., U.S. Forest Service Kootenai National Forest, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Geofluvial Hydrologist Water Consulting Inc., Applied River Morphology, and Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Lincoln County Conservation District, Lincoln County RAC, Natural Resource Conservation District, State Historic Preservation Office, and FWP.

The applicable permits to this project include the following: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit, Montana Department of Environmental Quality 318 permit, Lincoln County Conservation District 310 permit, and Lincoln County Floodplain Development Permit. Implementation of proposed actions in this SA will not proceed until the appropriate permits and authorizations are secured by the proponent, and the proponent agrees to implement the associated conditions.

Findings: The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD. This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Watershed Management Program that are relevant to environmental concerns; and 2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Watershed Management Program or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Carl J. Keller

Carl J. Keller

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney

Thomas C. McKinney

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: May 20, 2004

cc:

Mr. Jim Dunnigan, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, 475 Fish Hatchery Road, Libby MT 59923

Ms. Rox Rogers, Partners for Wildlife, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, 780 Creston Hatchery Road, Kalispell, MT 59901

Note: The following are maintained in the KEC Project File:

- > FWS NEPA Compliance Checklist dated 1/15/02
- > FWP's NEPA Compliance Checklist dated 1/5/04
- > FWP's Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice for Therriault Creek Channel Restoration Project dated 8/26/03
- > FWP's Therriault Creek Channel Restoration Project dated 8/26/03
- > SHPO's concurrence dated 8/28/03 stamped on FWS's cultural resources survey letter dated 7/30/03
- > Letter of Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation dated 8/5/03
- > Therriault Creek Meadow Stream and Wetland Restoration Project Final Design Report dated 3/19/03